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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. BEEF IMPORTS TO TAIWAN

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to focus news coverage from October 31 through November 2 on the "storm" over the Taiwan government's decision to allow the import of U.S. beef, offal and spinal cords and its aftermath; on the alleged game fixing by several Taiwan professional baseball players; and on the developments in cross-Straits relations.

12. Editorials and op-ed pieces in Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to lash out at the Ma Ying-jeou administration's decision to allow the import of U.S. beef, while some called for a referendum to be held and the Legislative Yuan to take strong actions against the decision. A column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" lambasted the Ma administration's decision and said it is the Taiwan people's health that will be harmed by allowing the imports of U.S. beef offal. A DPP legislator wrote in a "Liberty Times" op-ed that Ma's decision to make concessions to the United States proved that his 'diplomatic truce' doctrine has fallen apart. An op-ed piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" said that because Taiwan's domestic law has precedence, Taiwan should renegotiate the U.S. beef imports with the United States. An editorial in the KMT-leaning "China Times" said Taiwan should have learned its lesson from its previous WTO talks over rice wine. A column in the China-focused "Want Daily" said President Ma has not only failed to gain any political interests in allowing the imports of U.S. beef but might possibly sacrifice the health of Taiwan people. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said the beef war is over, with nobody being the winner. End summary.

A) "Where Is the Beef Offal?"

The "Free Talk" column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] wrote (11/1):

'... 'Where is the beef offal?' -- this question has also hit the vital point of Ma Ying-jeou; Ma opened [Taiwan's market] to U.S. beef offal; he is more than willing to lose his pants to show weakness to the United States in an attempt to use this as an excuse for his bowing down to China when signing the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) [with Beijing in the near future]. But it is the [Taiwan] people's health that will be harmed [if Taiwan] allows the import of U.S. beef offal that has the risk of [carrying] mad cow disease. When signing the ECFA with China and thus allowing China to directly control Taiwan's economy, what will be sold out will be [Taiwan's] national sovereignty!"

B) "The Ma Administration's Diplomatic Slaughterhouse"

DPP Legislator Ke Chien-min opined in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] (10/31):

"President Ma announced openly that in order to resume talks on the Taiwan-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), a free trade agreement, and an extradition agreement between Taiwan and the United States, or further, [for Taiwan] to be included in the U.S. visa waiver program, [Taiwan] has no other alternative but to make

concessions during its talks with Washington over U.S. beef. Such a statement is not only a public announcement [telling us] that [Ma's] 'diplomatic true' doctrine has already fallen apart but also an excuse to shift [the Taiwan people's] focus and to evade [the Ma administration's] responsibility for its failure to [defend Taiwan's interests] during the beef talks. ...

"The warning signal revealed by the talks over U.S. beef this time was that the Ma administration has now lost its balance in terms of strategic relations among Taiwan, the United States and China. As a matter of fact, the more that the Ma administration tilts toward China in terms of the strategic equilibrium among Taiwan, the United States and China, the more it will arouse doubts from the United States. Such a development will only result in a vicious cycle of [Taiwan's] losing its bargaining chips in talking with the United States. It appears now that the so-called diplomatic truce [policy] has already been killed by the converging attacks by the United States and China. ..."

C) "Surely [We] Can Scrap the Agreement and Renegotiate [the Import of U.S. Beef]"

Professor Chiang Huang-chih of National Taiwan University's College of Law opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (11/2):

"What is incredibly horrible in terms of the 'Protocol on U.S. Beef Imports to Taiwan' is at least the following two [items]: First, the full opening of [Taiwan's market to] the highest risk materials [in U.S. beef], including brain, spinal column, offal, and ground beef (General Requirements 18). Second, giving up [Taiwan's] rights to protect its people the minute something really happens! When the United States uncovers any mad cow disease case, our country

originally had the authority to ban imports of U.S. beef immediately, as was the case before. But under the 'protocol,' Taiwan has no right to ban U.S. beef imports; it cannot act until the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) determines the case based on the investigation report filed by the United States (General Requirements 3). What the Minister of Health claimed so righteously '[Taiwan] will immediately stop imports [of U.S. beef] once [BSE] case is uncovered in Taiwan' is obviously too optimistic.

Based on the 'protocol,' even if there were 100 such cases, let alone one, and one can prove they were caused by U.S. beef, Taiwan still has 'no right' to ban U.S. beef imports; [Taiwan's] every move must depend on U.S. goodwill and be determined by an international organization. Is it a must that such a 'protocol' be implemented? The [Ma] administration determined that 'the deal is signed and cannot be scrapped.' All Taiwan government officials said unanimously that once [Taiwan and the United States] renegotiate [the beef issue], it will do severe damage to [Taiwan's] prestige in the international community. 'But is it truly so?' ..."

D) "Why Do U.S. Mad Cows Put Taiwan People on the Verge of Hysteria?"

Cyrus C. Y. Chu, Distinguished Research Fellow at the Academia Sinica's Institute of Economics, wrote in the "Hall of Fame" column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (11/2):

"Taiwan-U.S. talks on reopening the imports of U.S. beef have triggered a huge storm lately, and the cause of the storm was that the Americans requested that [Taiwan] open to imports of U.S. beef bone, ground beef, beef offal. Many of Taiwan's experts have concerns about this aspect. An AIT official said, the chances are slim for people to contract mad cow disease by eating beef, and the rate for that was far lower than the risks of scooter accidents. [Taiwan's] Cabinet officials also said the chance of getting ill because of eating imported beef is one in a hundred millions. But the Taiwan people obviously cannot recognize such arguments, as evidenced in the way that the boycott movement launched by the Taipei City and other local governments have been echoed by many people [around the island]. ...

"Washington believes that 'expanding' the imported [beef] items [to Taiwan] would be beneficial for the United States, but the truth says the opposite. Expanding the imported [beef] products to

include the risky ones while the consumers have no knowledge of which ones are risky and which are not, it will generate the effect of 'a speck of rat dung spoiling a whole pot of porridge.' ..."

E) "Lessons Learned from Rice Wine to Beef"

The KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] editorialized (10/31):

"... In terms of the expanded import of U.S. beef, the [Taiwan] authorities said expanding the import of U.S. beef has become a stepping stone for talks between Taiwan and the United States, and that there is no way both sides can talk further unless the beef issue is resolved. Such an argument sounded exactly the same as what the Taiwan government said when it was anxious to enter the World Trade Organization and thus had to make concessions over [locally made] rice wine. It seemed to indicate that when it comes to trade and economic talks with its rival countries in the future, all Taiwan can do is to let others take what they want. ... From rice wine to beef, because of the beautiful vision of trade liberalization, the government has failed to play the role of a gatekeeper for the interests of its people during the process of trade talks [with other countries]. It has also underestimated the negative impact its decision might have on society. ..."

F) "Taiwan Political Leaders Must Develop New Thinking"

Nanfang Shuo (pseudonym for Wang Hsing-ching), a political commentator and cultural critic, wrote in a column in the China focused "Want Daily" [circulation: 100,000] (11/2):

"... For now, the global consensus toward cross-Strait issues is to maintain the status quo; even China cannot violate such a global consensus by trying to forcefully alter the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. As a result, there will not be any fundamental changes to the United States' fixed policy toward Taiwan just because of minor interests such as [Taiwan's] opening its market to U.S. beef. Ma Ying-jeou followed the previous old thinking of taking care of U.S. interests first, because he does not understand the basic agenda of the international situation, and that's why he has failed to resist [U.S.] pressure. In reality, it will not harm Taiwan's national interests if Taiwan adopts a tough attitude on the U.S. beef issue; all that will be impacted will be Ma's and Su Chi's personal relations with the United States, such as the treatment they will receive when they transit in the United States in the

future. The Ma administration has not only failed to gain any political interest from its decision to allow U.S. beef imports, but it may have sacrificed the health of the Taiwan people. ..."

G) "The Beef War Is Over with No Winners"

Columnist Joe Hung wrote in his column in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] (11/2):

"The beef war is over. And nobody is the winner. ... The outcome is that the administration has lost face for failure to exercise due disaster control; the opposition party did not succeed in startlingly embarrassing the government, for risky beef was first allowed to enter Taiwan while President Chen Shui-bian was in office; and Uncle Sam has unwittingly alienated the people of Taiwan who believe the Americans are their best friends abroad. There is no need whatsoever for the Americans to estrange the people of Taiwan by helping cattle raisers to earn a few million dollars more a year by selling ground and bone-in beef as well as offal. ..."

STANTON